



South Dakota Air National Guard
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Dakota Air National Guard celebrates 70 years

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – It's not unusual to see and hear the F-16s of the South Dakota Air National Guard flying over the city of Sioux Falls. In the coming months, members of the community should keep a watchful eye out for a new and unique tail on one of these aircraft.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the unit and to celebrate this event the unit has painted aircraft #428 with a distinctive tail flash, ventral fins and horizontal stabilizers. The usual subdued gray color scheme will be replaced temporarily with bold black, red and white colors.

Meant to represent aircraft of the unit throughout its history, the red lightning bolt in the design is representative of the first aircraft flown by the unit in 1946, the P-51 Mustang. The P-51 was an American long-range, single-seat fighter and fighter-bomber used during World War II, the Korean War and other conflicts.

The original design of the P-51 included a bold red lightning bolt across the nose of the aircraft. The lightning bolt is also a part of the ventral fin design on the 70th anniversary commemorative aircraft.

The ever present "Lobo" with a unique color scheme graces the left view of the tail of the aircraft with "70 years" prominently displayed on the right.

The process of changing the tail art on this commemorative aircraft was left up to the skilled craftsmen of the 114th Fighter Wing fabrication shop. From concept and design, to the final painting of the tail, several people were involved to make this project happen.

The unit reached out to long-time supporter and Sioux Falls aircraft enthusiast, John Mollison, to design the tail based on ideas from the unit. The Airman responsible for the final product was Master Sgt. Roger Vearrier, 114th Maintenance Squadron structural repair technician, a 25 year veteran of the unit.

"This was a fun and unique project to complete," said Vearrier. "I've been here since the beginning of the F-16 at Joe Foss Field, and this is the first time I can remember us painting a tail with a unique design."

Easily seen on the ground and in the sky, the tail design will grace the skies over Sioux Falls and the surrounding area for the rest of 2016 and will be prominently displayed at Sioux Falls Airshow 2016 – Power on the Prairie, which will be held at Joe Foss Field, July 23-24.

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“We are very excited about celebrating 70 years of the South Dakota Air National Guard,” said Col. Nathan Alholinna, 114th Fighter Wing commander. “The pride and professionalism of the Lobo Airmen is reflected in the striking uniqueness of tail 428.”

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160622-Z-BZ340-054: Master Sgt. Roger Vearrier, 114th Maintenance Squadron fabrication technician, makes a final inspection of the 70th anniversary tail art that was painted on an F-16 assigned to the 114th Fighter Wing at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, S.D, June 22, 2016. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the South Dakota Air National Guard and the unit will be flying this commemorative aircraft over the next few months to recognize this milestone. This aircraft, along with many more military and civilian aircrafts, will be on static display at the Sioux Falls Airshow at Joe Foss Field, July 23-24, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland/Released)



160624-Z-BZ340-004: This year marks the 70th anniversary of the South Dakota Air National Guard and the unit will be flying this commemorative aircraft over the next few months to recognize this milestone. This aircraft, along with many more military and civilian aircrafts, will be on static display at the Sioux Falls Airshow at Joe Foss Field, July 23-24, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland/Released)



160624-Z-BZ340-075: This year marks the 70th anniversary of the South Dakota Air National Guard and the unit will be flying this commemorative aircraft over the next few months to recognize this milestone. This aircraft, along with many more military and civilian aircrafts, will be on static display at the Sioux Falls Airshow at Joe Foss Field, July 23-24, 2016. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland/Released)

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